

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC007290
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Deborah Pacquette
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	15/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This is one of two privately owned children's homes in the area operated by the same provider. It provides accommodation and support to four young people of either sex, aged between 11 and 18 years old. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and young people with a mild mental disorder.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
28/10/2013	Full	good
19/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/11/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose consists of a statement as to all matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4(1))	31/01/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose that includes all the matters listed in the regulation (Regulation 17B (3)(4))	31/01/2015
34 (2001)	demonstrate more robust monitoring by improving the quality of the quarterly reports on the review of	31/01/2015

	quality of care and ensuring that all matters set in Schedule 6 are evaluated. (Regulation 34 (1)(2)(3))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- encourage and record the views of children, when any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used. (NMS 3.18)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Children and young people enjoy good health, including good physical, emotional and psycho-social health. They have easy access to general and specialist health professionals when they need extra support. This includes Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) when required. Children and young people have their good health maintained and promoted.

They receive information about the key health-risks and are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles. They learn about healthy eating and are enabled to gain practical cooking skills. They engage in the local leisure and sport activities, such as horse-riding, ice-skating and dance. They exercise, develop their personal interests and feel part of the community. They lead active and enjoyable lives.

Through regular key-working sessions, house meetings, daily interactions and at the statutory meetings, children and young people have good opportunities to express their views, wishes and feelings. Their self-awareness, confidence and communication skills have developed. They make choices and influence their care plans. They make positive contributions to the home and develop their decision making skills. An example of this is the young person's participation in the recent staff interviews, as part of the home's recruitment process.

They continue to maintain and develop further constructive relationships with their families and friends. They make good progress to develop the understanding of their background, the self-awareness and the acceptance of themselves and of other people. They are able to build positive attachments. An example of this is the young person who has built close friendships with her peers from the school.

Children and young people have engaged with learning to a differing degree. Their school attendance and educational achievements are varied.

Although some children and young people have achieved good and excellent outcomes across different aspects of their development, a number of the placements were not appropriate. Some young people were not doing well in the home and had to be moved. The lack of their progress and the home's contribution to the lack of stability in their lives is the main reason for judging the outcomes for children and young people as adequate overall.

Quality of care **good**

Children and young people describe the staff members as genuinely caring people. Staff place the well-being of individual children and young people at the centre of their practice. Staff are skilled at communicating with children and young people.

The management has used the recent non-effective placements to make the referral procedure more robust. The prospective placements are more carefully matched with the children and young people who already live in the home.

Admissions are now very well managed. There is a comprehensive and well-structured, week-long induction for the children and young people. At the beginning of their placement, young people receive clear information regarding the expectations, rules and boundaries. This helps them to settle in the home with ease.

Staff members ensure that children and young people have ample opportunities to contribute to their care and to influence the life of the home. Staff work in close collaboration with the social workers, independent reviewing officers and other professionals to ensure that the care plans for each child or young person are highly individualised, address all their needs and are consistently implemented. Good relationships and an effective key-working system support the on-going participation and involvement of the children and young people in their care. The high quality general care and support plans, as well as the more specific plans, such as the individual behaviour plans and the risk management plans are subject to on-going review. This ensures that the plans remain relevant and that the service is individually tailored, responsive and flexible.

In their discussions with the inspector, the social workers of the young people whose placements were not successful remained highly complimentary about the quality of care and support that these young people have received while living in this home. The home is able to demonstrate how it has promoted the permanence of some other placements. This includes a young people who came to the home with a history of multiple moves. One young person had been initially admitted as a transitional placement with a plan to move to a specialist therapeutic placement. She has done so well in the home that her placement has become long-term. Her social worker said that she was 'impressed' by the quality of the care in this home. Some professionals commented that this home has had more of a positive therapeutic impact on the young people than many others who specifically advertise themselves as being therapeutic.

Staff have high aspirations for children and young people. They ensure that children and young people have stretching targets that lead to progress. Through effective partnership working, staff members consistently address any barriers to the progress of children and young people.

The home has an effective complaints procedure that promotes the rights of children and young people. The process teaches them how to use proper channels of communication if they are dissatisfied with something. Their views, feelings and

complaints are taken seriously and acted upon. If it is not possible to act on their wishes and suggestions, they receive a clear explanation. An example of this is explaining the necessity of having highly visible fire exit signs to a young person who suggested that removing them would make the environment look more homely.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Staff's regular and comprehensive training on a number of safeguarding topics supports their good understanding of the vulnerabilities that children and young people in care face. The training and regular review of the safeguarding practice give staff members the skills and working tools to protect the children and young people in their care.

The home fosters a proportionate approach to risk assessment. Detailed care planning and robust risk management strategies protect children and young people, while enabling them to take reasonable risks and to develop a responsibility for their own safety. Key working sessions and individual engagement with the children and young people play important part in helping them to understand the risks and teaching them to behave in ways that increase their safety.

The lessons learnt from the placements that were not successful led to the development of more detailed risk assessments. These documents now play a more significant part in the referral process. The risk assessments regarding the location of the home and the envisaged dynamics with the children and young people who already live in the home contribute to the decisions made about accepting the referral or not. The home has a strong safeguarding ethos: the interests of children take priority over the business interests of the company. The management has recently refused a number of referrals on the basis of the risk assessments and the potential negative influence of the children and young people on each other, should they be placed together in this home.

The management is very good at involving other professionals to promote the health and welfare of children and young people. The home initiates and makes strong contributions to the professionals' meetings to ensure appropriate sharing of information and effective working together. An example of this is securing specialist support for the young person to address her known history of being sexually exploited and mixing with class A drug-users in the past. There have been no concerns of child sexual exploitation regarding this or other children and young people in this home.

Staff members work hard to create a safe environment that entices the engagement of children and young people and act as a preventative factor in terms of them going missing. When young people were absent without authority or went missing, the staff members followed appropriate procedures. They worked in close partnership with the police and social care to protect children and young people as much as

possible and to secure their safe return. Removing some young people from the home resulted in no episodes of missing.

The home favours positive behaviour management strategies and helping children and young people to develop a responsibility for their own behaviours. Comprehensive individual behaviour management plans that are in place underpin this approach. Sanctions are used sparingly. There has been only one recorded incident of a staff member intervening physically, since 2008. The staff member intervened as they were very concerned about the safety of the young person. Although the information regarding debriefing of the staff member and the conversations with the young person involved is available, the home's log of the physical interventions does not systematically include all required information. This is an area for improvement. The log of sanctions also does not include the views of the children and young people.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager, who is also one of the directors of the company and the registered individual, is a qualified social worker. She has owned and managed this home since 1998. Under her leadership, the home has developed a strong learning ethos. Staff members access a comprehensive training programme and receive regular supervision and review of their practice. In her discussions with the inspector, a local authority's social worker commented that the quality of the staff supervision is so high that she felt it would be worth disseminating it as an example of excellent practice. The manager places great emphasis on the reflection and on-going development of social care practice. The home also provides placements and professional oversight for student social workers.

The manager receives regular supervision from a doctor in psychotherapy. This person also provides independent monthly monitoring reports that are regularly sent to Ofsted. The manager completes and sends quarterly reviews of care to Ofsted. Although the actual monitoring is good, these reports do not consistently provide enough detail, clarity and evaluation. Improving their content is an area for improvement.

Another area for improvement relates to the content of the Statement of Purpose. Although the document contains a wealth of clear information about the service, some information that is required to be included by legislation, has been missed out. For example, the information about the home's approach to preventing bullying is not included. There are no indications that any bullying or intimidation has taken place in the home. Staff are very sensitive to the potential of children and young people influencing each other in negative ways and take great care to involve them in a positive circle of influence instead.

Having had a number of ineffective placements, this has been a difficult year for the

home. In partnerships with the placement authorities, the home has made significant and concerted effort to engage these young people positively and when those efforts failed, to move them on in as positive manner as possible. The manager has prepared comprehensive and insightful discharge reports on the needs and vulnerabilities to risks for these young people, as a learning exercise for this home and to contribute to the stability of their future placements. The reflection on unsuccessful placements has been used as a learning tool for the improvement of practice in this home and for the placing authorities. In addition to the more robust referral procedure, the team has developed deeper knowledge and understanding of the vulnerabilities facing young people. In particular those who experience mental health difficulties or a returning back to an area that reminds them of the past and presents them with the heightened risks to their welfare.

The manager has fully addressed the two requirements that were raised at the last inspection. The behaviour management policy has been revised and the quality of the records kept on the children's files has significantly improved. In line with the recommendations, the team has been diversified in terms of gender; the environment has been improved and the use of sanctions has been reviewed with the increased emphasis on rewarding children and young people for constructive behaviours.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.